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Postcolonial Discourse of Displacement and Immigration in Doris Lessing's *The Sweetest Dream*

Abstract

This paper examines the themes of immigration and diasporic life in Doris Lessing's novel *The Sweetest Dream*, a postcolonial work that reflects the author's experiences in London and Africa. Lessing's text returns to the world of the colonizer-colonized relationship, exploring the influential power dynamics that shape the lives of those who have migrated from the colonies to the colonizer's country. Immigration emerges as a central concern in postcolonial discourse, often defined as displacement, dislocation, and a sense of hopelessness that arises from the collision of disparate cultures. This study incorporates the theories of Edward W. Said and Robert J.C. Young to elucidate the diasporic experience of Lessing's characters. The paper argues that the migrant individuals in *The Sweetest Dream*, caught in the in-between spaces of their hybrid cultural identities, face the consequences of this ambivalence. They grapple with feelings of homesickness, unhomeliness, and the broader challenges of navigating a diasporic existence, all of which contribute to the formation of a hybrid culture for the displaced immigrants. By examining Lessing's postcolonial themes of migration, displacement, and hybridity, this paper illuminates the complex realities faced by those who have left their homelands to reside in the colonizer's domains.

Key Terms: Ambivalence, Diasporic life, Hybrid culture, Immigration, In-betweenness, Unhomeliness

1. Introduction

This paper aims to set an argument on postcolonialism and colonialism in *The Sweetest Dream* (2003) by Doris Lessing (1919-2013). The main focus of this paper is on the discourse of displacement and immigration, their traces in the life of Julia and Sylvia, and their diasporic lives. To enforce the aloft criticism, the paper focuses on the thoughts of Edward Said and Robert Young. The phenomena such as displacement, immigration, exile, and diaspora associated with colonialism, are also the central topics of postcolonialism. Diaspora which is the cause of migration undeniably could become a reason for changing the culture, society, politics, etc. of the postcolonial world.

Colonialism is the political power of an authorial country over less powerful ones which imposed its culture, thoughts, and language on an obvious level in the forms of enslavement, religious enforcement, and so on. Ronald Horvath delineates “It seems generally, if not universally, agreed that colonialism is a form of domination_ the control by individuals or groups over the territory and/ or behavior of other individuals or groups” (qtd. in Butt 47). It indirectly causes the annihilation of the colonized culture, language, personality, and identity of people. Colonialism affects various features of colonized people and in some cases makes them immigrate unwillingly to other countries. Not all migration shows up in a colonial framework. Immigration can happen willingly or unwillingly. Colonialism has consequences in the form of chaos, depression, and turmoil for the colonized people. Migrant literature and postcolonial literature have some significant overlap, even though not all the postcolonial literature discusses migration.

Postcolonial is an era that comes after colonialism and reached its peak in 1978 with Edward Said's book *Orientalism* (1979) which made him to be known as the father of postcolonialism which never dies even after his death. The definition which is exhibited for postcolonialism by Robert J. C. Young in *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (2001)

more clearly explains the term, “Postcolonialism is the product of resistance against colonialism and imperialism. Post is more than just a historical marker; conceptually postcolonial includes any historical resistance against colonialism” (27). The novel contains so many issues inside like world wars, colonialism, immigration willingly and unwillingly, post-colonialism, communism, political cases, etc. The characters’ whole life is affected by the time that they live and the political view of their government. Some characters are forced to migrate like Julia and cannot even call a German or even talk about her family because of Nazis. This paper tries to set an argument on colonialism, post-colonialism, and diaspora in *The Sweetest Dream* (2003), and how this element comes to show them. What does colonialism do with colonized and colonizer countries (Zimbia and London)? How do displacement and immigration show up and affect the lives of Julia and Sylvia? And their diasporic life is going to be discussed.

2. Methodology

Postcolonial discourses as umbrella terms have a special interest in theorizing phenomena of scattering people in borderlands or new lands. Postcolonialism is associated with notions of displacement, migration, and Diaspora. The discourse of migration and Diaspora is developed within the context of cultural studies, with emphasis on the conception of displacement and mobility of individuals from their homeland to another location. Postcolonialism as the legacy of colonialism is the study of the effects of colonialism on the colonized society and history, it studies the problems of the colonized migrated subject.

In postcolonial history, the western metropolises were confronted with an influx of postwar migration and refugees as indigenous or native. Edward W. Said one of the outstanding theorists of postcolonial studies, in *Reflection on Exile: and Other Essays* (2002) defines displacement and migration as distance, separation, and scattering of people across new countries and in continue he points to reasons for migration. From Said's perspective, the reasons for migration

are diverse and multifaceted. "... modern warfare, imperialism, and the quasi-theological ambitions of totalitarian rulers is indeed the age of the refugee, the displaced person, mass immigration." (104) Said explores the various causes of migration and diasporic life in his books.

In addition, the concept of diasporic life will be defined through the light of Young's view. Diaspora can be a complicated term that is not exhibited in the dictionary definitions. Young's primary concern has always been people and their cultures that exist or have existed on the margins and peripheries of society, whether nationally or globally. Young believes diaspora is the result of migration of self-exile or expulsion that refugees, people in transit, experience dispossession and homelessness. Diaspora as an experience of living in a new land focuses on the dislocation of emigrants and its effects on the new environment.

3. Main Discussions

Most Western countries as colonial powers consider themselves superior powers and want to control other nations. In this case Young believes in *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (2001) that by the time of The First World War, some Western countries abused their power and took control over the nine-tenth of the globe; Britain authorized the fifth of the region of the world and a quarter of the population. "Gellner argues that the recent domination of the world by the west can be seen as primarily an aspect of transformation of the world by next technology, economy, and science which happens owing to ... unstable imbalance of power" (qtd. in Young, 5). So colonialism was a miserable event of modernity which results from the fact that west abuses: "technological advance and the power that it brought for cultural superiority" (Young, 5). Although the direct oppression has been finished, all the countries are controlled by the economic, cultural, political, etc. systems of the West. Colonialism brought huge suffering and misery into the realm of humanity and imposed its culture, language, and

politic into other countries. “The appropriation of land and space meant that colonialism was therefore, as Said has emphasized, fundamentally an act of geographical violence a geographical violence employed against indigenous peoples and their land rights” (ibid 20). Colonization which was originally used by Europeans is not aiming to rule the indigenous people or take their wealth, but “primarily the transfer of communities who sought to maintain their allegiance to their own original culture, while seeking a better life in economic, religious or political terms” (ibid).

The Sweetest Dream by Doris Lessing illustrates the colonial, and postcolonial situation and the case of immigration and its effect on people’s lives. Colonialism not only affects the colonized people, it also destroys the lives of the people in the colonizer country who cannot stand that. Therefore, even though Europe is the one that colonized most of the world, Europe itself is involved in the colonization. As Lessing herself states, she recently received the Austrian State Prize for Literature for European Writing in Germany, as they recognized her as a European writer, “The whole of Europe has been involved in colonialism for two or three hundred years. You can't separate Europe from what is now called the Third World” (ibid, 123-4). In *The Sweetest Dream* (2003), we can see that London and Londoners could not secure the harm in the era of colonization and post-colonization. In this era, lots of people were involved in different parties like communists, Johnny calls his country a "rotten system." (*The Sweetest Dreams*, 199) Johnny is one of these people who despite having a wife and two sons prefers to leave them in poverty and follow his thoughts. This action brings his family lots of problems; his wife Frances has to take care of two children and earn money. God knows if Julia is not there to help them, what is going to happen? Although Frances unintentionally goes to Julia’s house, she and her two son’s life financially are protected.

War ruins live. In this novel, it ruins not only Julia who is forced to immigrate, but Frances and even Johnny who are always after some idealistic ideas to create something good from his

point of view. Johnny and Frances mention Julia's class as their enemy and even Johnny calls her a fascist. In London, people think if a group of people have a fair good life, it is because they take the poor's rights. "If you don't think like us, then you are a fascist" (ibid, 228). Johnny left Frances because she was not in the party anymore and he declared that he wanted someone who had a political overview. He also thinks that she is not equal to him; when for the third time he wants to marry, he says to Francis, "For once in my life I am going to have a woman who is my equal" (ibid, 161). He dares to see people lower than himself and simply insults his ex-wife. Sylvia's mother, Phyllida, once invades Julia's house where Sylvia begins to live and shouts why Sylvia lives here and she does not have a shelter, "And what about me?" demanded Phyllida. 'Who is going to look after me?' (ibid, 58)

Frances writes a letter about the new generation who are growing up to do nothing, "We seem to have bred a generation that expects food simply to fall into their mouths without their working for it" (ibid 66). Julia once said that "... these were none of them war children: the shadows of war were a long way behind them" (ibid, 217). Any single juvenile post-war is in some way unusual, two girls become pregnant (Jill and Sophie) without knowing the father and disappear for some years and when they return they do not tell where they were all this time, Sylvia is afraid of everything and if it did not for Julia her future remains unknowingly strange and maybe even dark, Rose involves in political community and communists and is drunk most of the times, although she admires Johnny, but he does not even answer her and takes her serious. Colin and Andrew have lots of problems and again it is Frances and Julia's financial and emotional support that leads them somewhere and even with this support they have lots of problems. Among these declarations, Julia once says to Frances that they are really lucky because they were not born in those days of turmoil and war.

Sylvia is rejected by her mother and grows up with Julia and Frances. Julia loves Sylvia and protects her because she forced to leave her family and country; in fact, Julia experiences

unwilling immigration, she migrates and comes to a new country and culture with new people. Julia helps Sylvia to wake herself up to the reality of the world. Julia tells her "stories about pre-war Germany – pre-First-World-War Germany" (ibid 96) to Sylvia. Sylvia and Julia help each other; in fact, these two characters more than other characters are under the effects of immigration and its consequences. Being emigrant is the only reason that these two are more close to each other. Julia is always worried about Sylvia. "She's too young to be out so late with a bad crowd of people" (ibid, 136). Julia thinks that Sylvia will marry someday anyway and this irritates her (ibid, 202). Julia does not want to lose her. "It seemed to her that she had never cared for anyone in her life but Sylvia, that the girl had been the great passion of her life – oh, yes, she knew she loved Sylvia..." (ibid, 203).

War and post-war affect people's lives, minds, manners, and so on. Julia is a victim of a war who loved an English man; when she was fourteen and married him while turned back to her country. She never understands if her decision was right or not, "Have I lived and loved?" (ibid 204) Julia cannot bear the Vietnam War and declares "Wasn't it enough, that old war, the first one, so terrible and then the second, what more did they want, killing, killing, and now this war" (ibid, 206). She is tired of war and remembers what war did to her. War forces her to immigrate to London and brings her homesickness for Julia, in a way that she is marginalized from the new society, she cannot match the rules and culture of a new society, so she becomes depressed and falls into ambivalence.

Another character who experiences immigration is Sylvia, Johnny's young stepdaughter. She comes to Julia's home and becomes a member of it. Sylvia educates with the financial help of Julia and becomes a doctor and decides to go to Zimlia and help the people there. This decision is a reason to immigrate to Africa, it is willing immigration. Although Sylvia's migration is willing, feelings of ambivalence, homesickness, and being in a hybrid society are company with her up to the end of the novel. In London, she prefers to work hard and her family

barely sees her. “Sylvia had become a junior doctor, much younger than most, and was working as hard as they do. When she did come home she walked in a trance of exhaustion up the stairs, not seeing anyone or anything...” (ibid, 192). Sylvia’s father has died and gives all his wealth to her. Rachel Bailey Jones, in her work *Postcolonial Representations of Women* (2011), contends that “fixity, as the sign of cultural/historical/racial difference in the discourse of colonialism, is a paradoxical mode of representation” (62). In the colonial period, the difference between cultures and races was solidified as an eternal fact of nature.

After Zimlia becomes independent, the Crowds in London celebrate it. “People shouted and wept and embraced each other and kissed strangers and on the platform speakers followed each other, black and white” (ibid, 234). There are a lot of people who are happy with the independence of Zimlia, but they don’t do some positive for Zimlia. Although colonialism ends there, the situation of living remains horrible. What colonialism has done to Zimlia caused huge damage that cannot be amended easily. After colonialism, have all the injuries, shocks, and harms that were put on people just been forgotten? “Rose is in the crowd who celebrates the independence of Zimlia, but later she does everything she could and every trick to stop Sylvia from creating a hospital there and finally succeeds.” (ibid, 432)

Sylvia is going to leave London and go to Zimlia to help the people who have just finished a nasty war. Sylvia is the one who cannot bear London and sees Zimlia not London as her hometown. “Both colonialism and imperialism involved forms of subjugation of one people by another” (Young 15). Like suppression of Zimlia by Britain. Zimlia’s people live in a horrible situation, “The people of that place accustomed to living in a hard situation” (*The Sweetest Dreams* 277). They don’t have the primary needs of life like hospital, medicine, hygiene, food, books, or someone to teach them. What is promised by their government has not been accomplished either. “*Animal Farm* which was their own story, as they said” (ibid 396). The

conversation between Joshua helps Sylvia at first, and Sylvia shows what he as a member of Zimlia thinks about England:

‘Do you have sick people in England?’
‘Of course we do.’
‘And poor people?’
‘Yes.’
‘As poor as we are?’
‘No, nothing like.’
‘That is because you have stolen everything from us.’
‘If you say so, Joshua, then so it is.’ (Ibid, 284)

Sylvia suffers from the bad situation of Zimlia although she is from a colonized country. “And it has X-rays – do you know what X-ray is? It has . . .’ She was thinking of the hospital she had trained in” (ibid, 295). Sylvia states, “They (Zimlia’s people) are such good people. I can’t bear it, the way they are being wasted” (ibid 403). Her suffering is not only because of the bad environment situation but also his mental suffering. She migrates to a new land which is full of shortages, and people cannot accept her as a new member of that society, so Sylvia in this in-between situation suffers from homesickness, and in the whole novel, she becomes ambivalent in Zimlia.

Colonizing people of a country is not just about making them poor and taking their primary tools of living like health, education, good food, etc. but also is about keeping their minds closed. They just put them in a situation where those colonized people believe that all these miseries find them because of the existence of a curse; they believe in superstitions. So they do not do anything to encompass all the troubles, they just go through with bullshits and just want God to save them. In such a situation, the colonizer country guarantees itself and stays in the position of power. When Sylvia tells Joshua that she hopes he is not going to have any more children he answers, “We know it is a plot by the whites, to stop us having children, so that we become weak and you can do as you like” (ibid, 296). Ridiculous and nonsense thoughts that encompass them. The virus of AIDS spreads there and people have no idea about its

essence. “But he (Joshua) was sure that AIDS had been deliberately introduced by the whites, from some laboratory in the States, a disease created to weaken Africans” (ibid). They don’t want to use condoms in order not to stop having children because they think whites expand the disease to make them use condoms and stop childbirth there. (ibid, 321)

The colonized people have some avenger toward the colonizer country which makes them know all the bad things come from there and they just step into their places without any progress. Some of them even think that this disease (AIDS) is a curse, so their children and loved ones are going to die one after the other. A man whose child is dead and his wife is sick thinks that it is a curse that caused all these to happen to him and it is the work of a witch. “She (Sylvia) had slowly come to understand how deeply the lives of the black people she lived among were embedded in superstition” (ibid 350). Rebecca (Joshua’s wife) also believes in the superstition that “her three children had died and a fourth was ill because her younger brother’s wife, who had always hated her, had employed a stronger *n’ganga* than the local one to attack the children” (ibid, 397). Rebecca and most of the people of Zimlia think that AIDS is a curse that kills them; Rebecca states that God is angry with us. Sylvia tries to convince at least Rebecca that it is a virus, not a curse. To explain the disease to them, Sylvia gives the example of the Black Death. “There was an epidemic, in Asia and Europe and North Africa. A third of the people died,’ said Sylvia” (ibid, 420).

Rebecca loves Sylvia and sees her as an angel. “We think Doctor Sylvia has been sent by God to us” (ibid 308). Sylvia tries to help them; she brings lots of books with her to Zimlia, to educate them and make them learn. Sylvia tries to make things fixed there, “We could build a reading room with that, or an infant’s nursery” (ibid, 312). Sylvia wants to fetch two sewing machines and a box full of books with her to Zimlia when she is back from London. (ibid 346) But in the airport, they do not allow her to get them with herself and she says, “Please – they are much needed, these books.” (ibid, 341) Sylvia was forced to bargain two sewing machines

with the box of books. Rebeca becomes happy when she sees the book, but simultaneously she is sad because of sewing machines because she wants to use them in her free time and earn money. Clever and Zebedee (Joshua and Rebeca's stepson) manage while Sylvia is in London. "They were so quick, so nimble, and they made her heartache, because of their potential and what was likely to happen to them. ... Both, when they finished work with her, sat at home reading, by candlelight, progressively more difficult books" (ibid 390). Are these children who have great potential deserve to have such a life in which there will be no future for them? Why can't they have the opportunity that Londoner children could have? Sylvia is confused and does not know what she can do. She thinks, "There is no person in Europe (if they have not been here and seen) who could comprehend this level of absolute need, a lack of everything" (ibid, 369).

People in London can think about feminism, and other things while people of Africa's only thought is about surviving, having enough food, health, and medicine just to keep them alive, and nothing more. They work all day without complaining, but people of the West do not work that hard and always complaining about things around them. Sylvia says to Colin that he must come and see Zimlia and write the truth about it, it is not like what newspapers write. The position of colonizer and colonized the history of Zimlia's Colonization by Britain. As Father McGuire tells Sylvia, "Have you not ever thought that that is the story of our history? The powerful take the bread out of the mouths of the povos –the povos just get along somehow" (ibid 419). When Sylvia talks about the promises that the government gives Father states, "So politicians make promises and break them. And then Rebecca explained that, I believed it all, I was a real fool, shouting and cheering at Liberation. I thought they meant it" (ibid). So even after recapturing their power back, Zimlia lives in complete misery. Sylvia cannot bear the injustice, "You (Sylvia) are always surprised when there is injustice. But that is how things

always are” (ibid). The injustice proceeds to the extent that they just do not allow a hospital has be created in Zimlia and stop Sylvia from helping them.

Rose does everything to stop Sylvia, “Rose knew Sylvia was not a racist, but, since she was white most blacks would be ready to say she was” (ibid 421). It is probable to call someone a spy in that situation and Rose wants to use it against Sylvia and call her a spy. “So, in such an atmosphere, it was easy for Rose to believe that Sylvia was a South African spy, but when so many were, it was not enough” (ibid, 422). Rose is supported by Franklin, who both used to go to Julia’s house for holidays, and they are considered as members of the family. Sylvia operates on girl who is Joshua’s cousin although she says I am not a surgeon, Zebedee and Clever plead with Sylvia to operate her (ibid, 428). She dies through the operation and which makes the situation harder than before for Sylvia. They give orders to close the hospital. Among all the efforts that Sylvia and others make, nothing changed in Zimlia and all things that she has done just are ruined. Sylvia is blaming herself for everything. None of the people in this novel are happy, all have problems and mind confusions, and trouble which they have to deal with in different ways and this is the consequences of war and colonialism.

4. Traces of Immigration and Displacement in Julia and Sylvia’s Life

In *The Sweetest Dream* (2003) Julia has to immigrate to England because she marries a military man. Julia’s migration can be classified as unwillingly immigrations. She fell in love with Philips before the world wars when she was just fourteen years old, so they waited until her sixteenth. But two weeks later two countries (Germany and England) started a war. In this war, Julia’s three brothers joined the war; two of them had died and one wounded. Julia really did not know that if she still loves him or not. Even Philip himself lost one of his hands in war. Finally they get married in 1919, but none of them are the people used to be. Julia who suffered in Germany because of her beloved, now next to him she is still in pain. She tries hard to turn

into an English woman. Language is one of things that changed after immigration. Julia tries hard and learns to speak English really quick and she speaks English excellent. She struggles in learning their cultures and always acts just like Philips wants her to. “They did not quarrel. They got along because she did not insist on her preferences” (*The Sweetest Dreams*, 28). Among all these works she is not happy because nothing remains from her identity which starts reshaping. She thinks that she is getting old because she does not enjoy celebrations anymore. Language could be a reason for crisis of identity in postcolonial literature. When immigration because of colonization are happened, some gap occurred while the language becomes inadequate to fit the new place. In immigration they have to learn the language of destined country and cannot use their own language unless with their family. In colonizing the language of the colonized country is imposed to colonizing country and day after day the original language changes (Language of the colonized power). Based on “Edward Said: The Postcolonial Theory and Literature of Decolonization” the article by Lutfi Hamadi PhD from Lebanese International University “The powerful colonizer has imposed a language and a culture, whereas those of the Oriental people have been ignored or distorted” (39).

She marries an enemy from one side and leaves her country on the other side. Julia is really under pressure. Julia is not the one who she used to be, her identity shifts. Displacement, immigration, language imposing create some otherness for the self which could not go positively and creatively. After the death of Philip, while Johnny leaves the house and his ex-wife and two sons start living there, Julia wants to stay alone in his room. By staying in this room she has the desire for a home and homeland, and she suffers from homesickness. Julia remains in her room and does not eat with others. Frances believes, “In all those years Julia had never said Yes, when asked to go out to supper, or walking, or to a play, or to a picture gallery. ‘Thank you, Frances, You are very kind,’ she always said” (*The Sweetest Dreams* 190). Julia always wants to be all alone by herself. The only person who makes her a little bit happy is

Sylvia who comes to live with them in a turmoil condition. Julia helps her to return to life. Maybe she resembles Sylvia to herself and feels safe with her. “But Julia had never had this kind of love with a child, certainly not with Johnny, did not know that a child growing – and Sylvia had gone through a rapid process of growing up, with her – would become a stranger” (ibid, 128).

Julia has a Nazi background and she was a member of Hitler youth, but she has never talked about Germany or her family. Her identity and personality goes through Englishness and nothing has been remained as Julia. This crisis in self that results from displacement could be seen in the colonized countries and even colonizer countries like England. Colonialism causes some alienation for the colonized people who could be placed in a position of domineer and submissive. In this situation, those who subdue people are imposed by some thoughts, cultures, which are opposed with what they once had. In this situation, Englishness creates a tendency to seek for alternative various identities. Julia is never happy and when she dies, “her brothers and Philip, handsome brave young men, stood about her bed, in smart uniforms that had not a spot nor spatter nor stain on them. She cried to them to stay with her, not to go off and leave her” (*The Sweetest Dreams*, 259). She begs them not to leave her once more. Although she has been called by so many people as Nazi, fascist, etc, but she has never talked about her family, her background or her country. She even talks English really fluently. Colin once thinks that he does not even know the family of his grandmother,

... but he had not met his grandfather, nor Julia's German family. But it was his family too . . . He bent close to Julia and said, ‘Julia, please, tell me about your brothers, about your father and mother, did you have grandparents? Tell me about them.’ She came out of her dream and said, ‘Who? Who did you say? They are dead. They were killed. There is no family now. There is no house now. There is nothing left now. It is terrible, terrible. (Ibid)

Julia thinks she is going to die and she has no home left and this is horrible for her. She has lost all the things that make her Julia, her family, home, past, language, culture, her identity. While is on deathbed, she likes to think about her memories,

She did not like being called back out of her memories, or dreams. She did not like the present, all medicines, pills and nurses, and she hated the ancient yellowish body that was revealed when they washed her. Above all, she had a persistent diarrhoea, which meant that no matter how often her bed was changed, and her nightdress, or how much they cleaned her, there was a smell in her room. She demanded that cologne be splashed about, and she rubbed it into her hands and face, but the odour of faeces was there, and she was ashamed and miserable. ‘Terrible, terrible, terrible,’ she muttered, a fierce old crone, who sometimes wept angry tears. (Ibid)

Julia loves poems and terrible poems because she never enjoys her life away from her country, her family, her culture, and her identity. She was forced to immigrate to the enemy country and live there until the end of her life, she never was happy. This displacement put everything from her; her country, family, language, culture, and more importantly her personality and replaced it with other cultures, languages, etc. “Her face was vindictive with righteousness. She (Julia) wept, though, at the end” (*The Sweetest Dreams*, 261).

Sylvia cannot stand London and she leaves her country to go to Africa to aid the people who need help. Her immigration is willing because she hates London. It seems that she was born to be a doctor and goes to help African people and drag them out of their misery. In Zimlia she faces lots of problems. “Sylvia was silent. This was the worst of her problems. In her experience, hospitals fed their patients but here if there were no relatives, then no food” (*The Sweetest Dreams*, 293). Once Julia wants to explain to Joshua that she can just use a little part of her knowledge because “This isn’t a proper hospital” (ibid, 295). But then she changes her mind, “She despaired, turning away, shaking her head from the enormity of it, in the same way as Joshua would, it was an African gesture” (ibid). Sylvia’s gesture becomes like an African’s. Andrew goes to Africa and goes to see Sylvia; he sees that Sylvia has changed a lot. “She wore jeans, and a loose top similar to the one he had seen on the black servant, and her hair was

bleached by the sun, and tied back with an elastic band. Between her eyes was a deep frowning furrow. She was burned by the sun a dry dark brown. She was as thin as he remembered ever seeing her” (ibid, 305). Sylvia is sad as well,

Sylvia tumbled on her bed. She wept. She had promised all the people who had come up to the house and come up again, and again, asking for books, that a new stock of books was coming. She felt abandoned. In her mind Andrew stood for perfect tenderness, and kindness; he was the gentle big brother to whom she could say anything, whom she could ask for anything – but he was a stranger now. That brilliant white suit!. (Ibid, 309-10)

Why does Andrew turn to a stranger for Sylvia? Is that because she on the one side sees all Zimlia’s misery and on the other side her brother’s happiness with a bright white suit whose problem is the coffee? Andrew gets lots of problems, but in comparison with Africa, his problems are just a joke. In there she works hard and becomes sad to see the situation of people (no food, medicine, book, nothing), but she feels real in Zimlia. She wants to live in Zimlia rather than London although the hard situation of there. She even once called Zimlia as a disgraceful place. (*The Sweetest Dreams* 315) London depressed Sylvia, “Sylvia was trying to lift her mood to his height because she was dispirited, London sometimes having this effect on Londoners who have been away from it and who, while living in it, have had so little idea of its weight, its multitudinous gifts and capacities” (ibid, 327).

Even when Sylvia goes to London, she thinks about Rebeca. Their refrigerator is full of eggs and fresh milk, here is not comparable to where she is living now in her home (Africa). Sylvia sees the difference between the two countries and cannot bear such discrimination anymore. ”Sylvia felt a blow to her heart, yes it was her heart, it hurt, for she was thinking of Rebecca, in her kitchen, with her little fridge, and her little cupboard which to her family down in the village represented some extreme of good fortune, generous provisioning” (*The Sweetest Dreams*, 328). Sylvia unwillingly compares the Londoners’ life with Zimlias’ and just cannot understand why the people here just complain about things that are not that important. “She

(Sylvia) told him (Colin) she wanted him to ‘write the truth about Zimlia’. Someone should” (ibid 333). Sylvia wants to help Zimlia anyway, she wants the people to know the truth about there, the misery and disaster they are in. Sylvia now wants good things for Zimlia. But Sylvia brings her language by teaching them, her culture by being a doctor and savior, and her thoughts by trying to stop superstitions. She is the one who immigrates there, but imposes her language, culture to Zimlia’s even in good way. The house used to be her home, where she has her family and feels safe, but now it isn’t anymore.

To come back to a house that loved you, took you in, kept you safe, a house that put its arms around you, that you pulled over your head like a blanket, and burrowed into like a lost little animal but now it is not your home, it is other people’s ... Sylvia went up those stairs, her feet knowing every step, every turn: here she had crouched, listening to the noise and laughter from the kitchen, thinking that she would never ever be accepted by it; and here Andrew had found her and carried her up to bed, tucked her in, given her chocolate from his pocket. Here had been her room but she must walk past it. (Ibid, 338)

Sylvia sees Zimlia as her home not London anymore. When she returned to Zimlia, she felt there was her home. “Sylvia felt herself again. Her visit to London had not been a success, except for her boxes of books. But that experience snapped shut behind her. London seemed unreal to her: this was real” (*The Sweetest Dreams*, 346).

After closing the hospital in Zimlia, Sylvia has to depart, but because she promised Joshua, she takes Zebedee and Clever with her to London. “these two orphans, for it was what they were – were going to have to take on London, learn everything, from how to use knives and forks, to how to be doctors” (*The Sweetest Dreams*, 455). It is clear that they both are going to have a better life in comparison with the life in Zimlia, in the fields of good health, food, education, social life, etc, but what is going to happen to their identity is unknown, and vague. They are going to leave their hometown and they’ll be in a better situation than they are now. So they could be happy about that, but at the same time sad because they are leaving their home and going to some other country where never be in their hometown. “But they (Zebedee and

Clever) were too excited, and were bouncing on the beds when she left, letting out cries that could have been a joy, or a lament" (ibid 458). Immigration and displacement cause Sylvia to become tired of everything and now she is forced to leave which she contemplates as home. She gives two boys to her family and dies like she never goes through all these things.

5. Diasporic Life of Julia and Sylvia

One must acknowledge that "all cultural statements and systems are built in the contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation, the hierarchical claims regarding the originality or purity of cultures are untenable" (Bhabha 1994: 37). Huddart further explains that "cultures are not discrete phenomena," but they are always in contact with each other, and the result is "cultural mixed-ness" (4). That is why many novelists utilize "hybrid cultural forms" to undermine the purity or authenticity of cultural identities or forms (ibid).

We should not limit diaspora to its ideal type, Jewish diaspora, scholars do not bother at all about the origin of the term, but rather free and arbitrary metaphorical use of diaspora has emerged in recent years. Diasporas are of importance to postcolonial studies because the descendants of these people have come to produce highly unique cultures that both maintain and build on the perceptions of their original cultures. Diaspora, which refers to the voluntary or forced migration of people from their native lands to new areas, is a significant historical aspect of colonization. Colonialism itself represented a profoundly diasporic movement, characterized by the temporary or permanent relocation and settlement of millions of Europeans across the globe. Like postcolonial identities, cultures, and religions, diaspora will also be differentiated and may lead to conflicts.

In [...] postcolonialism, tricontinental anti-colonialism has always been a diasporic production, an amalgam of the local and the cosmopolitan, a revolutionary combination which was the product not just of the diaspora itself, but of differences in the degree of repression in colonial and metropolitan territories. (Young, 218)

In a diasporic situation, People cannot belong either to the host land or the homeland. According to Julian Wulfreys's *Introducing Criticism at the 21st Century* (2002), “In the case, his central argument seems to be that, as border communities. Diasporas are not necessarily attached to or detached from macrocosmic centers of homeland and hostland“(Wulfreys 18). Like Julia who does not belong to England and Germany anymore. She is away from her homeland and most of the time, she prefers to be alone away from the crowd. “She (Julia) had lain at nights beside a man who was preoccupied with how to destroy her country, and she had to be glad it was being destroyed – and she was, but sometimes it seemed the bombs were tearing at her own heart” (*The Sweetest Dreams*, 203). Julia cannot decide whether she did the right thing to marry Philip or not. She is not determined by so many things:

Julia was thinking of those years spent apart from her love, Philip, waiting for him. And had it all been worth it? ... The fact was, and Julia was prepared to think so now, Philip should have married that English girl, so right for him, and she – but her mind went into panic when she contemplated what she might have done instead, with Germany in such ruins, such disaster, and then the politics, and then the Second World War. (Ibid, 215)

Generation is a fundamental concept for diaspora criticism. “Generational changes can and do affect the nature of diasporic formations and sometimes their very existence. Some diasporas do vanish into the homogenizing ideology of the nation-state. While others go on to create their nation-state” (Wulfreys, 24). Some diaspora decide to adapt themselves to the situation of the host land like Julia who starts to speak English even better than the Londoners and does whatever her husband wants. In the situation of war and the existence of Nazis in Germany, she does not speak about her homeland. While Sylvia tried to change their situation in Zimlia. She begins to teach them English and the way of life. “When Sylvia walked down to the village after lunch every day she found that outside every hut, or under the trees, or on logs

or stools, the people were reading, or, with an exercise book propped in front of them or on their knees” (*The Sweetest Dreams* 395).

Sylvia likes to devote herself to others and does whatever makes people happy. “Sylvia’s determination to do well at school was not only for Julia, but for Andrew too, who continued to be elder-brotherly, affectionate, and kind: when he was there, and not at Cambridge” (*The Sweetest Dreams* 130). Her childhood with her mother before came to Julia’s house was hard. “I’m just a spoiled brat, Sylvia told herself – the word surfacing from somewhere deep in her childhood” (ibid 275). Sylvia spends lots of her money to buy medicine, books, sewing machines, etc for Zimlia’s people. She totally devotes herself to them. When Frances once talks about Zimlia, Sylvia says that, “You can’t judge *there* by our standards.” (ibid, 334) and Frances replies, “I wasn’t judging. We are wondering if your skills aren’t being wasted. After all, you were in some pretty classy jobs” (ibid). They think Sylvia is wasting herself by going to Zimlia just to help people. “It was his duty to help with Zimlia” (ibid, 369). Julia drags her out of shit and helps her, now this is her turn to does something positive for Zimlia. After coming back from London, Sylvia, “felt as if her own real self, her substance, the stuff of belief, was leaking away as she stood there“ (ibid, 367). She somehow loves being there and helps people.

Edna Pyne is a white woman who forces to live in Zimlia. Once she starts talking with Rebecca and says that ““I want to leave, Rebecca, do you blame me?”” (*The Sweetest Dreams*, 400). She begins to cry, and Rebecca realizes that her tears are not for the hungry people; she is crying for her own sake. Edna Pyne is suffering because she does not want to live in Zimlia. She thinks that this place is not her hometown and she does not have to bear all these miseries. The concept of diaspora has had a rapid growth in the sociology science. In fact, diaspora is associated with the other terms of “transnationalism, globalization, emmigration, ethnicity, exile, the postcolonial and the nation” (Tölölyan 22). It shows that diaspora has a complicated meaning. In different domains, diaspora has different meanings.

Rose condemns Sylvia of spying. No matter what you have done for them you are not going to be accepted as one of them. And a little blow of something, an accusation can ruin what you have built through years. They follow the thoughts which most people think without even doubt it. Rose aims to undone Sylvia, “The fact was it was embarrassing, that hospital, so poor and so backward: Zimlia expects better. And then there had been a report from the Security Services, saying the doctor’s name was on a list of possible South African agents” (*The Sweetest Dreams*, 423). Both Franklin and Rose who used to go to that blessing place as Franklin calls it and calls it their home, somehow betray Sylvia and Julia (Calling them Nazis) because of their benefits. House belongs to Julia and although she is from Germany, anybody never heard any Nazi talk in that house. “Yet she (Rose) had been there much longer than he had, and so what she wrote had to be taken seriously” (ibid 434).

Two boys (Zebedee and Clever) are afraid of the future. It is really hard for them because they are going to quit their home and go to a new place that once colonized them and brought them misery. They imitate Sylvia step by step. “They were in the kitchen, then at the faithful table. The boys were evidently in a state of shock, or something like it. If black faces can be pale, then theirs were” (*The Sweetest Dreams* 461). After Sylvia’s death, Zebedee and Clever are accepted by Sylvia’s family. They are going to have a diasporic life in London all along with facilities.

6. Conclusion

In this novel, Zimlias lives in the postcolonial era. People probably do not even have the primary necessities of life like enough food, medicine, hospital, books, teachers, etc. All the people struggle with their identities. They are unsure about what is right and what is wrong. They just follow the rumors without hesitation like the existence of a curse or thoughts about spreading AIDS, and so on. In the future maybe the economic or political condition of Zimlia going to be

better, but getting rid of the thoughts that were put into their mind will be extremely hard. The colonized people were also colonized by their government just thought about their benefits and somehow abused the situation. Like Africa's government which does not even care about the health condition of Zimlia and forces Sylvia who is the only person who wants to build a hospital in Zimlia to live there.

Post-colonialism is a movement against colonialism. Displacement, immigration, and diaspora are related to postcolonialism. In *The Sweetest Dream* (2003) we can see different kinds of immigration and in some ways ruin their lives. Julia is one of those whose life was changed by the diaspora. Julia goes to England because of her love for Philips, an English commander, and the war between her homeland, Germany, and England. She never totally belongs to England or Germany. Although she starts to suit herself with England and learns to speak English even better than the natives and always does the things that her husband wants her to. She is always unhappy and prefers to remain alone away from crowds. She thinks that her love for Philip is worth all these difficulties. Zebedee and Clever also are forced to leave their hometown, Zimlia. Even though they get the opportunity to education in England, their future remains unknown. They do not have their language, culture, etc anymore and maybe they even cannot return to Zimlia. They never will belong to England and see there as their hometown, so they always going to search for their identity what most of the diasporas people do.

In *The Sweetest Dreams*, characters experience the changes in the aftermath of immigration and through their diasporic lives. They seek their true identities and face identity crises, loneliness and alienation throughout their lives. They are trapped in an identity bewilderment. They are not sure about their identity and if they belong to their homeland or hostland like Julia who abandons Germany, her country, culture, language, and family and settles in England as her new home for living. She is confused about her identity whether she

belongs to Germany or England. On the other hand, Sylvia was confused as well. England is her hometown, but she cannot accept herself as a member of a colonizer country, so she immigrates to Zimlia to help them, But she is never accepted by them as a real citizen.

Sylvia herself cannot adapt herself to their thoughts, culture, etc. as well, as a matter of fact; she wrestles with her identity. On the other side, she wants to stay in Zimlia and satisfy herself that she is not from a colonizer country, and on the other side she as an English girl does not belong there. And finally, she is forced to leave Zimlia before fulfillment. Therefore, identity crisis is a clear sign of colonialism. The characters get a problematic identity of selves with nations because this new nation in different fields like culture, language, identity process, etc... alter with their born nations. Julia tries hard to adapt herself to England by learning how to speak English even better than them, by treating others like them, and even by accepting England as a rightful country in the war with her own country. But ultimately she cannot feel herself and her identity concord with England.

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